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## Juggling Between 3R and 1R: The Challenging Life of Teenage Students

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### Abstract

This paper will look at how students understand the purposes of education, and how they situate the acquisition of academic literacy (3R) and intercultural competence (1R) in their vision of education and schooling experiences. By looking at the diversity among students, how the students perceive their schooling experiences and their knowledge of the multicultural social reality in Malaysia, this paper attempts to understand and make sense of the everyday living of the students from the point of view of 3R+1R.

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### 1. Introduction

What do teenage students in secondary schools think about their schooling experience? Do they feel obliged to attend school, or do they appreciate their opportunity to do so? Do they see the purpose of going to school as joyless disciplinary training they have to undergo, or do they find pleasure and happiness as schooling kids as well? How do they see the relational aspects of their schooling experience? This paper is a preliminary reading of the responses to a questionnaire given by 3,190 students in four secondary schools (named in this paper as PD, LT, MD and WP) in the state of Sarawak, Malaysia, during the first two weeks of May, 2010. Statistical analysis of selected questions from the questionnaires will be supplemented, where appropriate, with information collected during interviews and focus group discussions conducted with teachers and students. In each school, one to two classes in Form 4 were selected whereby students were further broken up into smaller groups to facilitate discussions. A focus group discussion was also held with those teachers who were available in each school.

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